

Officer Espinoza was a bright young star in the San Francisco Police Department, and he had a promising future and loving family. Now that future is gone. His wife Renata is without a husband. His beautiful 3-year-old girl Isabella is without a father.

And Officer Espinoza is far from the only law enforcement officer gunned down in his prime by an assailant wielding an assault weapon.

A recent study by the Violence Policy Center stated that one in five police officers killed in the line of duty is killed with an assault weapon.

That study listed a number of officers gunned down by assault weapons, and I would just like to list a few examples because if we let the assault weapons ban expire, we can expect many more of these incidents.

On January 10, 1999:

Officer James Williams was killed with a MAK-90 or SA85 7.62mm rifle. Officer Williams was among a group of officers who were searching for a rifle that had been discarded by the occupants of a vehicle that was involved in a chase with police. While they were searching for the rifle, a gunman opened fire from a nearby overpass, killing Officer Williams. Chad Rhodes was arrested and charged with special-circumstances murder, attempted murder, three counts of firing an assault weapon, and possessing an assault weapon. Rhodes pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

On June 12, 1999 in Orange County, California:

Sheriff's Deputy Brad Riches was killed with a MAK-90 or SA85 7.62mm rifle. Deputy Riches was sitting in his patrol car outside a 7-Eleven when his police cruiser was riddled with assault weapon fire. The 7-Eleven clerk said that a customer told him he was carrying an AK-47-style assault rifle to shoot a police officer. Maurice Steksal was convicted on November 19, 2002 of the first-degree murder of Deputy Riches.

And there are many, many more. But the list would be far longer if the assault weapons ban were not in place, because more of these guns would be out there. They would be easier for criminals to get and to use, and more officers would be killed.

Indeed, these shootings underscore the fundamental danger assault weapons pose to our society.

The good news is that the Senate has gone on record in support of extending the ban on military-style assault weapons. In a bipartisan vote in March, the Senate approved a straight 10-year renewal of the current ban as an amendment to a bill being pushed by the National Rifle Association giving gun manufacturers and dealers protection from civil lawsuits.

But in a bizarre twist, the NRA scuttled its own bill to prevent the extension from becoming law. This is the power of the NRA.

In over a decade as a U.S. Senator, I have encountered no lobby stronger than the gun lobby. I am convinced that if the NRA is going to be defeated, it will be by the mothers and fathers of this Nation—parents who want a future for their children free of the violence

and bloodshed sparked by the vast overproliferation of guns throughout our country.

These are the people who came together in the first Million Mom March 4 years ago, and these are the people who will come together again this weekend.

These people will stand firm and say: Enough is Enough. Now is the time to protect our families from assault weapons. There cannot be any turning back.

Over the past decade, we have had a chance to examine the assault weapons ban and to determine if it works and enjoys support.

The results are in.

The ban works. Recent Department of Justice records indicate that the use of banned assault weapons in crimes has declined measurably—by 65 percent in one analysis—since the measure took effect.

The men and women of law enforcement across the Nation support the ban because, on the front lines, they know it protects them and makes communities safer. The Fraternal Order of Police endorses another 10 years, as does almost every other major law enforcement organization, including chiefs of police all across the Nation.

No weapons have been confiscated from legitimate gun owners. In fact, the bill specifically protects 670 shotguns and rifles used for hunting.

Almost three-fourths of the American people, and two-thirds of gun owners, support renewing the ban.

In fact, a recent University of Pennsylvania Annenberg poll found that 71 percent of all Americans support renewing the assault weapons ban; 64 percent of people in homes with a gun supported extension of the ban; and even 46 percent of people in NRA households support extending the ban, contrary to claims by NRA leadership that its members are universally against this proposal.

Some in the Senate opposed the ban a decade ago, fearing it would do little to reduce crime, and could threaten the constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners and hunters.

Now, 10 years since that vote, America has seen just the opposite: the ban has made our streets safer, it has protected law enforcement officers, and in no way has it diminished legitimate gun owners' rights.

Moreover, we all know that the world has dramatically changed since 1993. September 11, 2001, has taught us many lessons; among them that terrorism lurks in our own cities and communities. Given today's dangers, it defies logic to let suicidal terrorists, gang members and others simply walk up to a counter and buy these weapons for potential attacks.

Assault weapons pose a fundamental danger to law enforcement and our society, and we will continue to work to extend the ban in the Senate. The assault weapons ban is too important to let die.

The bottom line is this—what is the argument for letting these banned guns back on the streets?

Who is clamoring for newly manufactured AK-47s?

Who is clamoring for new TEC-9s?

These are guns that are never used for hunting. They are not used for self-defense, and if they are, it is more likely that they will kill innocents than intruders.

These guns—and everyone knows it—have but one purpose, and that purpose is to kill other human beings. Why would we want to open the floodgates again and let them back on our streets? There is simply no good reason.

For a number of years now, President Bush has indicated that he supports renewing the assault weapons ban for another decade. But he has not lifted a finger to help. Ultimately, however, the voice of the White House will be pivotal in determining if the ban is ultimately approved by Congress and signed into law.

Now is the time to renew a sound law for another 10 years.

We do this in the memory of Officer Espinoza and all the other police officers shot and killed with assault weapons.

We do this on behalf of all the women who are marching on Washington this weekend.

And we do this to keep our communities safe.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

Robert Martin was found lying outside an abandoned school in Ashburn, GA, with head injuries from a blunt object. Martin was wearing a dress at the time. Press reports indicate that Martin had been beaten and harassed before because of his perceived sexuality.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

THE NEED FOR NATIONAL ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY STANDARDS

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong support for the Electricity Reliability Act of 2004, S. 2236. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation and I hope that the Senate acts on this bill soon. Although we cannot agree on the comprehensive energy bill that has been before the Senate, we can agree on

many provisions in the bill. Mandatory reliability standards are a perfect example of what we all agree should be part of our national energy policy.

Our citizens deserve a reliable, safe power grid. This is one of the country's most pressing energy needs. We have to do all that we can to prevent blackouts like the one that hit the east coast and Midwest last August and the Electric Reliability Act of 2004 takes a crucial step toward that goal. The bill grants the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—FERC—the explicit authority to create mandatory electric reliability standards. FERC can also approve the formation of electric reliability organizations, which will, subject to FERC review, enforce these standards. Strong and enforceable electric reliability standards will help ensure that our citizens and businesses do not have to worry about their respective lives and livelihoods being disrupted by blackouts.

In fact, a joint investigation by a United States-Canadian task force found that the lack of mandatory reliability standards contributed to the August 14, 2003, blackout. This massive outage affected 50 million people in eight U.S. States and parts of Canada. The task force report found that an Ohio-based utility and regional grid manager together violated at least six reliability standards on the day of the blackout. Examples of the reliability violations that contributed to the blackout included: not reacting to a power line failure within 30 minutes, not notifying nearby systems of the transmission problems, failing to analyze what was happening to the grid, inadequately training operators, and failing to adequately monitor transmission stations. Since the industry is largely self-regulated, violations of these voluntary reliability standards carry no penalties. This legislation would hold utilities accountable for reliability violations.

Let's act now and pass this legislation before we face a blackout like we saw last summer. We should work together to pass the elements of the broader energy bill that are necessary and widely supported. I urge my colleagues to support Senator CANTWELL's bill and to join me in asking that this legislation come to the floor.

OFFICER STEPHAN GRAY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the life and mourn the death of Officer Stephan Gray of the Merced Police Department. On April 15, 2004, Stephan Gray, age 34, became the first officer to be killed in the line of duty in the history of the Merced Police Department. Stephan is mourned by his wife Michelle Gray and their three children: Landess, 13; Isaiah, 5; and Cameron, 3.

Officer Stephan Gray died in the line of duty while protecting the community that he cherished. Officer Gray worked for the Merced Police Depart-

ment for seven years, where he was assigned to the Gang Violence Suppression Unit and the Special Operations Unit. Officer Gray was well known for going above and beyond the call of duty, distinguishing himself as a dedicated and brave officer through his many heroic efforts and accomplishments. During his tenure with Merced Police Department, Officer Gray received a commendation for assisting in the capture of a dangerous criminal street gang member and for saving the life of an eleven-month-old infant who was not breathing. Officer Gray devoted himself to making the streets safer for the people of Merced.

Stephan Gray was also a loving husband, father, and son. He enjoyed playing catch with his son, Isaiah. He loved to sing and dance and was an avid scuba diver and tropical fish enthusiast.

My heart goes out to his wife, his daughter, his sons, and the countless others whose lives he touched. I want them to know that people across California share their grief as we also salute the gift of his life and work.

A gallant officer is gone, but he will not be forgotten. We can and must carry on his work by giving community police officers and other first responders the resources they need to bring peace and safety to our Nation's streets and neighborhoods.

IN CELEBRATION OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and to pay tribute to the struggles and enormous contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to our Nation's history and culture.

Each May since 1978, we have honored the rich heritage and countless achievements of the many Asian Pacific Americans in our country. The month of May was aptly chosen in order to commemorate both the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in 1843, and also the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, which was constructed in large part by Chinese laborers.

"Freedom for All, a Nation We Call Our Own" is the theme for this year's celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This phrase beautifully encapsulates the great journey of Asian Pacific Americans to achieve the American dream and rings especially true during these uncertain times at home and abroad.

The men and women of our Armed Forces, many of whom are from the APA community, are proudly serving all over the world to secure our homeland. Currently, thousands of young Asian Pacific Americans are defending our country, joining the ranks of over 300,000 APA veterans who have served in the name of freedom.

One such veteran is my esteemed colleague, Senator INOUE of Hawaii, who

began his career in public service during World War II where he served in the Army's 442d Regimental Combat Team. The famed "Go for Broke" regiment of Japanese American soldiers courageously defended our country abroad even as their families endured unjust internment at home.

This is just one of the many achievements made by Asian Pacific Americans in the face of adversity. Despite discriminatory laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Alien Law Act of 1920, and the forced internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, Asian Pacific Americans have forged ahead to become a very successful and fast-growing segment of American society.

Today, over 13 million Asian Pacific Americans reside in the United States. Whether through academics, technology, the arts, or business, the impact of the APA community is felt in virtually every aspect of our society.

The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that Asian Pacific American firms alone account for 2.2 million American jobs and generate over \$300 billion in revenue. In California alone, Asian Pacific Americans own over 12 percent of all businesses, making them a significant force in the State's economy.

Asian Pacific Americans are also gaining an increased presence in Federal, State, and local governments. Throughout my career, I have had the distinct honor of working with many extraordinary Asian Pacific American leaders such as Senators Inouye and Akaka of Hawaii, Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, and Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao. Each of these public servants can function as an inspiration to all Americans.

But even as we celebrate these achievements, we must continue to address the struggles and hardships experienced by certain segments of the APA community.

In California, we have large populations of Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders who have recently sought refuge in our country as a result of war and civil unrest. As these newcomers to America pursue their dreams and goals, we need to remember the challenges they face and stay vigilant against discrimination and hate.

That is why I believe one of the most significant contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to our Nation is their role as our neighbors. America draws its strength from diversity. The presence of Asian Pacific Americans in our communities further adds to the vibrancy of the American landscape.

The strength of diversity is evident in my home State of California, where close to one-third of the entire Asian Pacific American population lives. One only needs to look at Los Angeles and San Francisco to see the rich kaleidoscope of cultures and traditions that Asian Pacific Americans have brought to their communities.

Places such as Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Little Saigon and Koreatown